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**NRO REVIEW COMPLETED**

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR HOLDERS OF USIB-D-46.4/30

SUBJECT : Requirements for a Near-Real-Time  
Imagery Satellite System

REFERENCE : USIB-D-46.4/30 (COMIREX-D-13.7/6)  
16 July 1969, Limited Distribution

1. In restricted session with [ ] representing the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) present, [ ] advised the Board that the reference report had been fully coordinated by the COMIREX members and noted that the USIB had heard his briefing on this subject at an earlier meeting. He said that in addition to providing some background the COMIREX report addresses itself to those characteristics of the system identified by NRO as needing clarification.

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2. General McChristian informed the Board that his staff had just completed a special study on the near-real-time imagery satellite system and its implications for the Army in the future. As a result he had three suggestions for changes in the wording of the report, the first of which was on page 3, paragraph 3, where he would insert the words "in determining enemy capabilities and vulnerabilities" in the second sentence of the paragraph after the word "significantly". The Chairman with Board concurrence accepted this change. General McChristian then proposed the addition of "East Germany" after "Moscow area" in the last sentence of paragraph 6. d. on page 5, which was also accepted by the Board. The third suggested change was in the first sentence of paragraph 6. f. on page 6 where General McChristian wished to add the unified and specified commands and their components and to permit initial interpretation and exploitation to take place

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in designated overseas locations. [ ] expressed concern on this point and preferred the way this point was already dealt with in the last sentence of paragraph 6.f. General McChristian pointed out that, while this last sentence does indicate that further study will be needed to determine the means and timeliness of dissemination to other locations, he felt that the special Army study had already justified his suggested change.

3. [ ] said that COMIREX recognized the need for the information in overseas locations and that the wording of the last sentence was intended to convey the idea. He believed that the methods to be used to meet this objective required a good deal more study since such overseas distribution could have quite an impact on NRO resources. General McChristian emphasized that Army commanders overseas must have the read out of this proposed system presented and appraised in the setting of their own interest and area of responsibility rather than from the point of view of a Washington-based interpretation.

4. [ ] said that he could not visualize that the processing of the take from this type of a system could be done in a mobile van since it would be much too difficult and far too costly. He said he doubted that a processing capability could be developed at all commands.

5. General Cushman noted that the system being discussed was new and very complex and will probably require changes in present methods which cannot be set up as a full system initially but will require study as the report states.

6. [ ] listed three ways that the Army objective could possibly be met but noted that they have not been studied as well as they should: (a) All data collected would be transmitted to a number of ground stations. Each station would be very large and complicated, add greatly to the cost and provide much unnecessary data to most locations. (b) Selection of data as it returns from the satellite for direct transmission from the satellite to overseas locations. This method has not been considered carefully as yet, and each ground station would still be large and expensive but it might meet the Army problem. (c) Limited re-transmission where a number of selected frames would be sent from a central station to locations other than Washington via communications satellites. There would be some delay in re-transmission but it appears to be most compatible with General McChristian's proposal.

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7. General McChristian said that the read out of selected frames was really what the Army wanted and that frames of selected targets available on a real-time basis to a commander overseas would provide him with the type of read out he needed to meet his responsibilities. He said that he did not believe that this thought was adequately expressed in the report as presently drafted.

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8. [REDACTED] again suggested that the thought was not excluded and that the NRO needed time for further study of the various options because of the implications regarding cost and complexity. Admiral Harlfinger said that during a COMIREX discussion Navy had been assured that the intent of the language in the report was to permit expansion of the use of the data and that Navy was proceeding to plan for such use to meet its ocean surveillance responsibility.

9. General McChristian said that as written the report says that all initial photo interpretation is to be done in Washington. [REDACTED] explained that Washington is intended as the initial center but that this does not exclude dissemination to overseas locations for interpretation and the matter is to be studied and not ruled out.

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10. [REDACTED] said that he did not favor changing the wording since he did not wish to see the requirement stated before the matter was studied more fully. [REDACTED] questioned the requirement from a cost point of view since the Army commanders would not have the capability to look at all the photography. General McChristian pointed out that the requirement for read out of selected photography of the commanders' area of interest was the requirement as he viewed it.

11. Mr. Helms then proposed and the Board agreed to an addition at the end of the last sentence of paragraph 6.f. stating "keeping in mind the requirements of unified and specified commanders for the timely dissemination of selected imagery".

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12. [REDACTED] expressed concern with the wording in paragraph 6.c. which he said had been read by some to mean daily access to "all targets". [REDACTED] explained the intended meaning could be restated as "any targets", and in any case this problem was taken care of by the specified number of frames per day. He assured the members that both the COMIREX and NRO

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interpreted the system characteristics in this manner. [REDACTED] said he had the same type of problem with "one hour" in paragraph 6.f. when he wondered if the cost of attainment would be excessive. [REDACTED] said that he understood from the previous NRO advice that this was feasible, but cost implications were to be studied by NRO pursuant to Recommendation 7.c. under which the trade-offs could be identified and excessive cost avoided.

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13. [REDACTED] tabled a DIA proposal that the Board in approving the requirements in the COMIREX report recognize that there are other SIGINT and imagery systems being considered or developed and that each of these candidate systems could entail significant acquisition costs. Consequently, he requested that, when these requirements were forwarded for NRO guidance, it should be indicated that the value of the near-real-time system relative to the value of current capabilities or to other candidate systems has not been determined. [REDACTED] also would indicate that, as recommended in the report, the COMIREX requirements should be viewed as "initial guidance"; they may have to be adjusted as the feasibility and cost implications are identified and assessed and as a total NRP plan is developed. The Chairman agreed that he would include a statement along these lines in his transmittal of the requirements to the NRO.

14. The Board then approved USIB-D-46.4/30 amended as follows:

a. Paragraph 3., page 3, last sentence, insert after "contribute significantly" the phrase "in determining enemy capabilities and vulnerabilities and".

b. Paragraph 6.d., page 5, insert "East Germany" after "Moscow area" in last sentence.

c. Paragraph 6.f., page 6, add to the last sentence, "keeping in mind the requirements of unified and specified commanders for the timely dissemination of selected imagery".

15. Attached are revised pages 3, 5 and 6 incorporating the above changes for substitution in all copies of reference document.

[REDACTED]

Executive Secretary

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Attachment

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